



Permanent Mission of Ukraine
to the International
Organizations in Vienna

Statement on Russia's ongoing aggression against Ukraine and illegal occupation of Crimea

As delivered by Ambassador Yevhenii Tsymbaliuk,
Permanent Representative of Ukraine to the International Organizations in Vienna,
to the 1342nd meeting of the Permanent Council
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Madam Chairperson,

We are grateful for all the efforts of Chairpersonship and Secretary General to resolve the situation with the blockade of the SMM teams in Horlivka and Donetsk.

We also praise the entire team of the SMM for their hard work in such very challenging circumstances. Any violation of the Mission's mandate and attempts to discredit its activities are unacceptable and there is no justification for that.

Ukraine is strongly convinced that proper engagement of the SMM, in particular monitoring of the security situation in the area, will contribute to reducing tensions as well as to preventing possible provocations along the line of contact.

However, we all have no illusions about the purposes of intimidation, obstruction and impediments the SMM OSCE is continuing to face in the territories occupied by the Russian Federation.

One of the latest examples, as reported by the Mission, on 22 October the SMM patrol was stopped near the Kargil plant in Kremynets by two members of the Russian armed formations and "escorted while driving through non-government-controlled areas". Yesterday, the Chief Monitor reported on another case of obstruction of the free passage through the entry-exit checkpoint at Stanytsia Luhanska for the deputy Head of the OSCE SMM, who was forced to wait for almost two hours before allowing him to proceed. So, my question to the Russian Federation is how long will all these impediments last? And how long will the Russian side oppose giving security guarantees for the opening of additional forward patrol basis, especially close to the border areas?

However, the BOM closure, we have already discussed in details earlier today, is very indicative about further plans of the Russian Federation to proceed with hidden preparations for new offensive.

As well reporting about the presence of military type trucks near Samiilove and Klynkyne settlement about 2.5km and 1.5km to the border with the Russian Federation, as the SMM reported on 4, 11 and 18 October, remains also irritating for the Russian authorities.

That is why, it is also not surprisingly that in order to conceal growing evidences of its direct participation in the conflict the Russian Federation has flooded the occupied territories with its sophisticated jamming equipment, including UAV suppression stations like "Zhitel", "Shipovnik-Aero", "Repellent-1". This equipment has the ability to interfere with the use of long-range UAVs at a distance up to 45-60 km.

In the meantime, the Russian occupation administrations on the ground have intensified the preparatory measures for so-called six-months reservist training. While

IHL forbids to enlist population in occupied territory in the occupier's armed forces, the locals are threatened with prison for draft evasion.

Together with large-scale passportization, this clearly demonstrates Russia's attitude to the residents of the occupied territories. They are cynically used as smoking screen and human shield, while Russia is provoking new escalations and implementing its scenario of political subordination of Ukraine.

However, such negligence by Russia of duties under IHL and obligations under the Minsk agreements cost human lives.

According to the SMM reports, the number of ceasefire violations remains stable high. In the past week, the Mission registered 1,416 ceasefire violations.

Over these days Ukrainian armed forces were shelled near Kamianka, Svitlodarsk, Travneve, Novozvanivka, Novohryhorivka, Krasnohorivka, Katerynivka, Novoluhanske, Pivdenne, including with the use of Minsk-proscribed (120mm) mortars.

Near Pavlopil settlement, the Russian armed formations with the use of drone dropped VOG-17 grenade shells on the Ukrainian positions.

Unwillingness to stop flows of ammunition through the border and withdraw its troops from Ukraine also place special responsibility on Russia for infrastructure damages on the both side of the contact line.

Even, on the 26 October, shelling of Hranitne settlement with 120-mm mortars left six houses damaged. It is in addition to the damage of 125 civilian properties and infrastructure sites confirmed by the SMM only since the beginning of 2021.

Furthermore, from 14:25 to 15:15, October 26, a battery of 122-mm howitzers D-30 of the Russian armed forces fired on the positions of the Joint Forces in the area of the same Hranitne settlement. Two Ukrainian servicemen were wounded and one of them was killed. It is not surprising that the Russian armed formation ignored all demands to stop the ceasefire violations, leaving no other choice to the Ukrainian forces but to respond with fire, including to protect the civilians, using precision munition, which immediately lead to de-escalation of the situation in that particular area.

What did the Russians do to cover these offensive activities? As usually, they started disseminating disinformation about the alleged seizure of Staromariivka settlement, next to Hranitne, by the Ukrainian Armed Forces.

Since the positions of the Ukrainian Armed Forces remain unchanged, this is yet another attempt by the Russian armed formations to accuse Ukraine of violating the contact line and the Minsk agreements in general.

Furthermore, in spite of all Ukraine's efforts to engage Russia, as a party to the conflict, into constructive discussion on the peaceful settlement of the conflict within the TCG as well as in the N4 format, we see no reciprocity on behalf of Moscow. The latest TCG meeting was no exception.

Due to Russia's destructive position, there is no progress on even purely humanitarian issues, like demining, release of detainees or EECs opening in Schastia and Zolote as well as on the resumption of functioning of other EECs.

In fact, by blocking the entry-exit crossing points on the contact line Russia deprives the residents of the occupied territories of basic needs, including access to assistance from COVID-19 as well as to social payments, education, administrative and banking services.

Is it that level of care about the civilians the Russian delegation is speaking at PC meetings?

Excellencies,

This week has much encouraged us in terms of power of the rule of law. The Amsterdam Court of Appeal decided that the collection "Scythian gold" has to be returned to Ukraine, given its sovereign rights over the Crimean Peninsula and the need to protect the cultural heritage until the territorial integrity of Ukraine is restored.

Nevertheless, Ukrainian citizens in Crimea also need some additional protection and special attention, including the Permanent Council as well as the OSCE institutions.

Let me quote how imprisoned RFE/RL freelance correspondent Radio Free Europe Vladyslav Yesypenko described his abduction in a public letter last week.

And I quote: “[they] stuck wires to my head and tortured me for two days with electricity... Electric current was melting my brain, it felt like my heart would burst out of my chest... I was thinking about my family, my little girl, never hoping to see them again. I barely survived the torture and will soon mark my seventh month being kept in a pre-trial detention centre in Simferopol”. End of quote.

And there are many other similar cases.

Nariman Dzhelyal is subjected to punitive psychiatry. Other detainees, abducted on 3 September, are also facing humiliating psychological and mental pressure. For instance, Asan Akhtemov has been held in the quarantine cell already for 43 days. Normally, it lasts up to 14 days.

And Teimur Abdullaiev has once again been placed into solitary confinement, as reported by the Ukrainian ombudswoman. His case has already become an emblematic one. In 2020 – the fact corroborated by the UN Mission - Teimur spent at least 139 days in solitary confinement. While in the disciplinary cell, he was required to maintain a standing position and was not allowed to sit or lay down on a bed during the day.

Furthermore, on 25 October, 21 Crimean Tatars, including journalists, were detained while standing outside the premises of so-called military court in Simferopol. Among the detained was also lawyer Edem Semedliaiev. Currently, he remains one of few lawyers who continue to defend political detainees in the occupation courts.

Excellencies,

In conclusion, our every meeting more and more convinces me that the Russian authorities fall back upon old Soviet trick of besieged fortress.

It seems to be a self-serving argument to justify its own growing military expenditures, endless military exercising as well as large-scale military buildup on the Western border, including with Ukraine.

So, we again urge the Russian Federation to stop its aggression against Ukraine, reverse its illegal occupation of Crimea, de-occupy certain areas of Donetsk and Luhansk regions, and restore freedom of navigation in the Black Sea, through the Kerch Strait and in the Sea of Azov. Russia must fully implement its commitments under the Minsk agreements, including the withdrawal of its armed forces, mercenaries, armed formations, and weapons from the temporarily occupied territories of Ukraine.

Thank you, Madam Chairperson.